

CO-6

PR/Membership Committee Report
July 2004

Membership: State librarians were contacted by Carol Hammond and Suzanne Miller in hopes of getting every state librarian in our 12 state region to be a personal member of MPLA.

Each State representative and committee member were asked to use send the following letters to the library directors and trustees in their states:

Name (Director)
Address

Dear:

We are writing to you, and to all of the library directors in the 12-state Mountain-Plains Library Association region, about the activities of our organization that serve the library community in your state. As a regional organization, we provide a unique and well established network for individuals and organizations; MPLA is 56 years old, and is a presence in all twelve member states through its continuing education, conferences, and other activities.

We encourage you to join MPLA as a personal member. Membership in our organization has fallen over the last three years, and we'd like to have all of you as participants and partners in our work to promote libraries and the development of those who work in libraries. As leaders in your region, we see you as a group and individually as people we want in our organization because of the opportunity for partnership that it would provide.

Some of the aspects of MPLA that should be of particular interest to you are:

- A section for State Agencies, Cooperatives and Systems, which brings together your colleagues with similar programs and interests across the region.
- Sponsorship of the MPLA Leadership Institute at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, which is designed to help new professionals develop the leadership skills the profession will need in our states. This provides an exceptional learning and self-development opportunity which will have direct benefit on the pool of qualified leaders in libraries.
- Access to MemberClicks, an online directory of members in MPLA, that can be used to find individuals in all kinds of libraries and easily contact them by email.
- The MPLA newsletter, which gathers and reports library news from each of the member states. "Around the MPLA Region" runs several pages in every issue, and is contributed by representatives from each state. This provides a broad and detailed snapshot of activities in all 12 member states.
- Joint conferences, in partnership with all of the twelve state associations, that take us around the region where we network with new colleagues we would not otherwise encounter. One of the benefits members of MPLA value most is the networking and lasting contacts they are able to develop with colleagues outside of their own state.

- MPLA is smaller, cost is reasonable, and travel to joint conferences is more affordable. It is easy to participate and become involved.

Most importantly, MPLA is an active group in your state, providing services to librarians in your area, and we will both benefit from your visible support. We believe you will find this organization to be of significant value to you. We hope you will accept our invitation to join with us in our work to provide quality libraries in the MPLA region.

A membership application is enclosed. Please also visit our web page at www.usd.edu/mpla for additional information, our conference schedule, free jobline, and other resources.

Sincerely,

(State Representative)
Address

(Committee Representative)
Address

Committee members were also given lists of members who had allowed their memberships to lapse, in order to contact them to encourage them to rejoin or identify why they hadn't. We also reminded Board Choice winners that they are eligible to renew at ½ price. Most responses were either that they planned to rejoin, or that they didn't find the organization relevant to their work.

We submitted an agenda item to the strategic plan to revisit a discounted membership for people who already are members of their state organizations.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debbie McGuire, Chair, PR/Membership